

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An image generating method, including:

regarding original moving pictures as two-dimensional images that vary along time axis, and when the moving pictures are expressed, in a virtual manner, as a box space formed by the two-dimensional images and the time axis, cutting the box space by a surface that contains a plurality of points each of which differs from the other in time value;

projecting an image that appears on the cut surface onto a plane in the direction of time axis; and

outputting the images appearing on the plane as new moving pictures, by varying the cut surface in time.

2. An image generating method according to Claim 1, wherein varying the cut surface in time is realized by moving the surface along the time axis.

3. An image generating method according to Claim 1, wherein the surface is defined by a function of coordinates of points contained in the two-dimensional images.

4. An image generating apparatus, including:

an image memory which sequentially stores original moving pictures along time axis;

an image conversion unit which regards the original moving pictures stored in said image memory as two-dimensional images that vary along time axis and, when the moving pictures are expressed, in a virtual manner, as a box space formed by the two-dimensional images and the time axis, cuts the box space by a surface that contains a plurality of points each of which differs from the other in time value, and which projects an image that appears on the cut surface onto a plane in the direction of time axis; and

an image data output unit which sets to a new moving-picture frame the images appearing on the plane obtained by varying the cut surface in time in said image conversion unit.

5. An image generating apparatus according to Claim 4, wherein said image conversion unit realizes varying the cut surface in time by moving the surface along the time axis.

6. An image generating apparatus according to Claim 4, wherein the surface is defined in a manner such that the surface has continuous or discrete width in the direction of the time axis, and said image conversion unit synthesizes images covered within the width.

7. An image generating apparatus according to Claim 4, wherein said image conversion unit cuts the box space by a

surface defined by a function of coordinates of an image region constituting the two-dimensional image.

8. An image generating apparatus according to Claim 7, wherein the surface is defined by a function which does not depend on a horizontal coordinate of the two-dimensional image.

9. An image generating apparatus according to Claim 4, wherein said image conversion unit cuts the box space by a surface which is defined by a function of attribute values for an image region constituting the two-dimensional image.

10. An image generating apparatus according to Claim 4, further including a setting input unit which acquires, via a user operation, input of a setting value used to define the surface, wherein said image conversion unit cuts the box space by the surface defined by a function of the setting value acquired by said setting input unit.

11. An image generating apparatus according to Claim 10, wherein the function of the setting value acquired by said setting value input unit is expressed by a curve that indicates a relation between coordinates of points contained in the two-dimensional images and time values thereof when a relation between the function of the setting value and a

variable of the function is displayed on a screen.

12. An image generating apparatus according to Claim 10, wherein said setting input unit acquires, as the setting value, coordinates of characteristic points in the two-dimensional images, and wherein said image conversion unit cuts the box space by a curve defined by a function of the coordinates of the characteristics points.

13. An image generating apparatus according to Claim 4, wherein said image conversion unit partially changes a rate of the new moving-picture frame to be outputted from said image data output unit in a manner such that, according to attribute values of image regions that constitute the two-dimensional images, the cut surface is varied in time with different speed for each of the image regions.

14. An image generating apparatus according to Claim 4, wherein the time value that defines the surface includes at least one of a past or a future with the present time being a center thereof.

15. An image generating method, including:

reading out, for each in-picture position of an image contained in a target frame in original moving pictures, data that correspond to the in-picture position, from at

least one of a plurality of frames contained in the original moving pictures;

synthesizing the read-out data; and

forming new moving pictures by sequentially outputting frames formed in said synthesizing.

16. An image generating method according to Claim 15, wherein said reading out is such that from which at least one of the plurality of frames the data are to be read out is determined for each in-picture position in accordance with a coordinate thereof.

17. An image generating method according to Claim 15, wherein said synthesizing is such that the read-out data are synthesized in a ratio according to an attribute value of the image contained in at least one of the plurality of frames.

18. An image generating apparatus which includes an image memory, an image conversion unit and an image data output unit,

wherein said image memory records, in sequence, original moving pictures for each frame, and said image conversion unit reads out, for each in-picture position of an image contained in a target frame, data that correspond to the in-picture position from at least one of frames

recorded in said image memory and synthesizes the data, and wherein said image data output unit sequentially outputs the frame synthesized and reconstructed by said image conversion unit.

19. An image generating apparatus according to Claim 18, wherein said image conversion unit determines, for each in-picture position, the at least one of frames in accordance with a coordinate thereof.

20. An image generating apparatus according to Claim 19, wherein the coordinate is such that it is orthogonal to a scanning line.

21. An image generating apparatus according to Claim 18, wherein said image conversion unit determines, for each in-picture position, the at least one of frames in accordance with an attribute value thereof.

22. An image generating apparatus according to Claim 18, wherein said image conversion unit determines a plurality of frames as the at least one of frames, at predetermined time intervals, and wherein said image conversion unit synthesizes the plurality of frames in a ratio according to an attribute value thereof, for each in-picture position.

23. An image generating apparatus according to Claim 18, wherein, for each in-picture position of the images contained in the target frame, said image conversion unit applies a directing effect according to an attribute value of the position thereof.

24. An image generating apparatus according to Claim 21, wherein said image conversion unit sets time intervals of the determining frames to separate time intervals in accordance with an attribute value thereof, for each in-picture position.

25. An image generating apparatus according to Claim 18, wherein the target frame or the at least one of frames is at least one of a previous frame in time or a subsequent frame in time with respect to a reference frame which should have been naturally outputted by said image data output unit from said image memory.

26. An image generating apparatus according to Claim 18, wherein, for each in-picture position of the images contained in the target frame, said image conversion unit adds a predetermined pixel value in accordance with an attribute value thereof.

27. An image generating apparatus according to Claim 9,

wherein the attribute value is a depth value.

28. An image generating apparatus according to Claim 21,
wherein the attribute value is a depth value.

29. An image generating apparatus according to Claim 9,
wherein the attribute value is a value that indicates the
order of approximation relative to a desired image pattern.

30. An image generating apparatus according to Claim 21,
wherein the attribute value is a value that indicates the
order of approximation relative to a desired image pattern.

31. An image generating apparatus according to Claim 9,
wherein the attribute value is a value that indicates a
degree of change of an image area in time.

32. An image generating apparatus according to Claim 21,
wherein the attribute value is a value that indicates a
degree of change of an image area in time.

33. An image generating apparatus according to Claim 9,
wherein the attribute value is a pixel value.

34. An image generating apparatus according to Claim 21,
wherein the attribute value is a pixel value.

35. An image generating apparatus according to Claim 4, further including an image input unit which acquires, as the original moving pictures, images shot by a camera and sends the images to said image memory.

36. An image generating apparatus according to Claim 18, further including an image input unit which acquires, as the original moving pictures, images shot by a camera and sends the images to said image memory.

37. An image generating apparatus according to Claim 18, further including a setting input unit which acquires, via a user operation, input of a setting value used to determine the at least one of frames, wherein said image conversion unit determines the at least one of frames according to the setting value acquired by said setting input unit.

38. An image generating apparatus according to Claim 28, wherein the setting value acquired by said setting input unit is expressed by a curve that indicates a relation between coordinates of points contained in the two-dimensional images and time values thereof when displayed on a screen.

39. An image generating apparatus according to Claim 28,

wherein said setting input unit acquires, as the setting value, coordinates of characteristic points in the two-dimensional images and wherein said image conversion unit determines the at least one of frames according to the coordinates of the characteristic points.

40. A program executable by a computer, the program including the functions of:

regarding original moving pictures as two-dimensional images that vary along time axis, and when the moving pictures are expressed, in a virtual manner, as a box space formed by the two-dimensional images and the time axis, cutting the box space by a surface that contains a plurality of points each of which differs from the other in time value;

projecting an image that appears on the cut surface onto a plane in the direction of time axis; and

outputting the images appearing on the plane as new moving pictures, by varying the cut surface in time.

41. A program executable by a computer, the program including the functions of:

recording, for each frame, data on original moving pictures to a memory sequentially;

reading out, for each in-picture position of an image contained in a frame to be outputted, data that correspond

to the in-picture position, from at least one of a plurality of frames recorded in the memory;

synthesizing the read-out data with the frame to be outputted; and

forming new moving pictures by sequentially outputting the synthesized frames.

42. A recording medium which stores a program executable by a computer, the program including the functions of

reading out, for each in-picture position of an image contained in a target frame in original moving pictures, data that correspond to the in-picture position, from at least one of a plurality of frames contained in the original moving pictures;

synthesizing the read-out data; and

forming new moving pictures by sequentially outputting frames formed in said synthesizing.